

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Rambling Round Revelation #16

Cycle 2

The Lamb

Revelation 5:1-14

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Care Calling: Randall Rich

Host: Carol Hill

Saturday 6/1: Clean Up: The Saunders

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Revelation 5:1-14 (NASB)

1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. **2** And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" **3** And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. **4** Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; **5** and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." **6** And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits

of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Today, we begin Cycle 2 of Revelation.

Cycle 1 was John's promise that whoever reads and hears Revelation will be blessed.

Then Jesus wrote his letters to the seven churches in chapters 1-3, and those letters also apply to Orcutt Christian Church.

Then in Chapter 4 John we are introduced to worship in Heaven.

Now think about this ... some commentators say that the worship in Heaven is a pattern of worship for the church.

When King David was explaining to Solomon how the temple was built and how the worship was to be carried out, he said -

1 Chronicles 28:19 (NJB)

19 all this was in the document conveying Yahweh's instructions, by which he revealed the pattern of what was to be done.

And, in chapter 4 we are being recalled to worship God who sits on the Throne at the center of the spiritual universe.

4:6b-8 Night and day the living creatures never rested from their doxology of praise: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come.

Now when we enter the mysterious apocalypse found in chapters 5 to the end of the book we enter a world that is out of our experience.

The symbolic language is difficult to understand because it describes a place we have never been and a universe we have never experienced.

And, this symbolic language has been interpreted in some of the wildest ways you can image.

William Barclay quoted one despairing commentator as saying

"there are as many riddles in the Revelation as there are words, and another [commentator said] that the study of the Revelation either finds or leaves a man mad."

The website owner for 21CenturyRevelations maintains

"For several years, I have been tracking the similarities and associations between what was documented in the book of Revelation and modern day technology. I began to realize that the frequency of similarities was unusually high. It is these circumstances that lead me to the construction of this web site, 21st Century Revelations." <http://www.21stcenturyrevelations.com>

He explains that the locust in chapter 9 are actually Apache attack helicopters.

He further identifies the Abrams tank and missal reentry systems.

G.K. Chesterton, in his book: **Orthodoxy**, p. 9, says

"though St. John saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators."

I. A Review of the 15 Week Montage

Now, just a quick review of what we have learned in 15 sermons on this book that promises a blessing on those who read and hear it.

Gary DeMar, who has his Ph.D. from the Reformed Seminary, has written extensively on Revelation.

He says:

“One reason people get caught up in the end-time apocalypticism of Revelation is because the language used seems to describe earth-shattering and earth-ending events..”

The fanatics say Revelation is being fulfilled by nature and technology.

For example, consider the following:

Revelation 6:13 says that “the stars of the sky fell to the earth” (also see 8:10; 9:1).

How can this be possible since the size of a star is many times larger than the earth?

A single star hitting the earth would vaporize it.

And yet we are to believe that the Antichrist will rule the world using super-sophisticated technology after these “stars” fall to the earth (Rev. 13).

Then there’s Revelation 8:12: “Then the fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.”

How can a “third of the sun” be smitten without catastrophic results on the whole earth and not just a third of it?

The more biblical approach is to follow how the Bible applies the sun, moon, and stars to the temporal judgment of nations (Isa. 13:10-13; 24:16, 19-23; 34:4; Ezek. 32:6-8; Joel 2:10, 30-31; 3:15-16; Hab. 3:6-11).

In none of these examples is the destruction of the entire world in view even though cosmic language is used.

To ignore how a passage is used in the Old Testament is like trying to interpret Egyptian hieroglyphics without the Rosetta Stone.

Then there’s

Revelation 12:3 (NASB)

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

John F. Walvoord quotes E.W. Bullinger approvingly:

“It is impossible for us to take this as symbolical [Rev. 12:3]; or as other than what it literally says. The difficulties of the symbolical interpretation are insuperable, while no difficulties whatever attend the literal interpretation.”

No difficulties whatever?

A seemingly plausible explanation for Walvoord is that the “stars” are actually meteorites.

If Jesus is describing a meteor shower, then I can’t see how this would be a significant sign today since there have been many of them over the past 2000 years.

In the famous Leonid meteor shower of 1833, one estimate is that more than one hundred thousand meteors an hour passed by earth.

But if John is seeing meteorites in Revelation 6:13 and 12:4, then they are meteorites in Matthew 24:29.

Even “a third of the meteorites of heaven” falling to the earth would have a devastating effect on our planet.

The earth would be uninhabitable.

Scientists have speculated that a single meteorite threw up enough debris upon impact with Earth millions of years ago that it “ended the reign of the dinosaurs.

The colossal energy released in its collision with Earth is now estimated to be equal to the detonation of up to 300 million hydrogen bombs, each some 70 times bigger than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.”

Gary DeMar, Ph.D.

<https://garydemar.com/>

Those of you who watch TV are familiar with the use of montages.

A montage is the process, or technique, of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of film to form a continuous whole.

It is a technique of producing a new composite whole from fragments of pictures, text, or music.

Think about how this is done.

In one corner of your TV you will see a swimmer diving into the water.

And right beside him you will see a golfer swinging his club and hitting the ball.

Just below that a basketball player pops up to make a basket.

In another corner a football player goes out for a pass, and then a hockey player comes speeding over the ice.

As you view these montages you come immediately to the conviction that a sports program is being shown.

But you do not get discouraged because you fail to identify the person in each frame, nor do you become discouraged because you don't know the location of each picture, or even of the relationship of all the various separate fragments of pictures.

That has a connection with reading Revelation.

Revelation makes use of a series of montages.

The Apostle John in writing Revelation is writing suburb theology using sophisticated poetic imagery.

He is not giving us a road map or a time table of the future.

But using imaginative poetry he is conveying to the reader/listener the assurance that God knows how the whole of human existence is going to turn out.

He is telling you and I that God is in control and will be victorious in the end, and that He will share His triumph with ALL His people.

BUT before that can come about, there will be great tribulation, which we are currently going through.

There will be terrible times of tribulation, as there have been since Adam and Eve brought sin into this priceless world.

So... what is John's purpose for sharing the book of Revelation?

It is so you and I, and all readers/listeners, can strengthen our nerves so we can remain faithful to the end.

There are no Apache Helicopters, or Abram tanks, but John does use things that the readers/listeners in the end of the first century could relate to.

Through warnings, Revelation bring fortitude for faithfulness.

Through making known assured truths, it provides foundations for steadfastness.

Through promises it brings hope to the faithful.

And John uses Revelation to highlight these warnings, truths, and promises. Revelation is written to those in the first century, but every Christian in every age is called to be faithful until Christ returns in His glory.

And, having considered John's use of montages, and maybe dispelled some of the myths about Revelation, we are ready for the most momentous event in all history.

Nothing is more significant than this event.

Are you ready?

John is now ready to introduce us to

II. The Lamb

When John the Baptist was baptizing at the river Jordan, he saw Jesus approaching him.

He loudly announced to the thousands gathered there

John 1:29 (NASB)

29 Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Some of us recently attended the Wycliffe Translators Banquet, and we were amazed at the use of modern technology used by those who are translating the bible into the living language of some tribe.

Think of the problem these translators have in translating this verse.

Of course you and I are familiar with lambs and sheep, even if we have never actually seen one.

But what if you are working with a people who have NEVER seen sheep?

They don't have a word for sheep in their language.

Do you substitute sheep for some word they do have.

What if they were familiar with hogs, would you use hog to replace lamb?

Could you use calf in the place of lamb?

Donkey, dog, cat?

Well, taken in the context of Holy Scripture, nothing is as satisfying as the word Lamb.

Lambs played an important part of the Old Covenant.

Remember when Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac?

Genesis 22:7-8 (NASB)

7 Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

Isaac knew the lamb was the animal used in the sacrifice.

And God did provide the animal.

Exodus 29:38-42 informs us that a lamb was required for a sin sacrifice.

And a lamb was required in the keeping of the Passover.

When the New Covenant was established, it became clear that the whole of the Old Covenant system was a foreshadowing of the fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (NASB)

7 Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Seven centuries before Christ became our Passover, Isaiah predicted it's fulfillment.

Isaiah 53:6-7, 12 (NASB)

6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

What's so amazing about the use of the word "lamb" is that in the NASB it is used 37 times in the NT, and 31 of those times it is in Revelation.

It is the Apostle John's favorite title used to denote Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus used the phrase "Son of Man" to refer to Himself during His ministry as recorded in the Gospel accounts, so the book of Revelation used the title "Lamb."

And, we are about to experience one of the most dramatic moments of all creation.

No more striking passage is found than this opening scene we are looking at today.

And John describes the scene in a way that captures our imagination, and we begin picturing it in our minds, and we see God is on His throne.

In your imagination you can see that He is enveloped in a crystal clear translucent light of brilliant white and fiery red with a rainbow of greenish hue around the base of his throne.

He is surrounded by seven flaming torches, representing the Spirit of God, and the four living beings represented by the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle. Each of these figures has six wings and eyes observing all things in all directions.

They give constant praise and thanks to the Holy God.

Beyond these living beings is a circle of 24 elders on thrones, who rise one by one and come to the throne, remove their crown of gold, bend down low to the ground, and in humility present their crown to the ONE sitting on the throne.

Then you see the flashes of lightening, and then you begin to hear the peals of thunder, the rumblings like earthquakes.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

In response to the challenge of the angel no one came forward; none was good enough to open the roll.

And at this John in his vision fell to weeping sorely.

It seemed to him that there was no one in the whole universe to whom God could reveal his mysteries.

Here, indeed, was a terrible thing.

Long ago Amos had said:

Amos 3:7 (NASB)

7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets.

But here was a world so far from God that there was none able to receive his message.

For John that problem was to be triumphantly solved in the emergence of the Lamb.

5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Please look at your sermon notes and see the word "lamb" in verse six, because this is something fascinating that the Holy Spirit surprises us with. There is one Greek word used for the sacrificial lamb. The Greek word *amnos* is a lamb or a 1-year-old sheep. The *amnos* is the lamb of sacrifice.

But there is another word for lamb which Jesus uses with Peter.

John 21:15 (NASB)

15 Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."

The Greek word Jesus uses with Peter is *arnion* A little lamb.

Now why am I asking that you look at your sermon notes to see these two words?

Because I want you see something very unexpected that Jesus does.

You see that *amnos* is the lamb of sacrifice

Wouldn't you think the lamb on the throne is the Passover lamb?

Instead, John uses another word, one that is only used one time outside the book of Revelation in the whole of the New Testament.

It is not the sacrificial lamb, but the word used by Jesus speaking to Peter instructing him to care for the Christians as they are nurtured in God's Kingdom.

The lamb on the throne showed clearly a death wound on his cut throat, for this was how all lambs were slaughtered for sacrifice.

But this lamb was not lying there lifeless as a slain victim.

He was standing, very much alive and triumphant.

The scar showed the sacrifice, but the word chosen to designate the lamb was a living, triumphant one, ready for action, and worthy of the praise and honor given him.

The lamb shares the throne with God.

And the entire throne room is filled with the sovereignty of the one on the throne.

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

And around the entire assembly is the rainbow, the promise of God's mercy. All are charged with joyful excitement, filled with the qualities of God and the person and worthiness of the lamb.

As we conclude Cycle 2, engage your imagination.

The scene leaves no doubt.

We would like to live there for eternity.

Invitation and Prayer